sub-rule (1) of Rule 4 of the National Shipping Board Rules, 1960, this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Chairman may direct, two Members from among the Members of the House, to be the Members of the National Shipping Board *w.e.f.* the date of its re-constitution due on 10.9.2005:.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

MOTION FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL WELFARE BOARD FOR SEAFARERS

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): Sir, I move the following Motion:

"That in pursuance of clause (i) of Rule 4 of the National Welfare Board for Seafarers Rules, 1963 (as amended) read with Rules 3 and 5 framed under sub-section (2) of Section 218 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (44 of. 1958), this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Chairman may direct, one member from among the members of the House, to be a member of the National Welfare Board for Seafarers."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

The State of Agriculture, Poverty and Unemployment in the country in the Light of Mid-term appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan—Contd.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How much time would you require, Mr. Minister?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): Sir, I would take as little time as possible. Let me say, ten minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that!

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Mr. Chairman Sir, hon. Member, Shri Sitaram Yechury, and others have raised important issues regarding the recent slowdown in the growth rate of agriculture sector and its impact on poverty and unemployment, in the course of the discussion regarding the Mid-Term Appraisal. I would only like to point out that the Government is sensitive to the issues raised by them, and that a comprehensive policy and plan of action in regard to many of the points raised by the hon. Members has been appropriately incorporated in the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan.

श्री सभापति : नारायणसामी जी, आप बात मत कीजिए, मंत्री डिस्टर्ब हो रहे है। आप अपनी सीट पर बैठ जाएं, बातचीत न करें, मंत्री जी डिस्टर्ब हो रहे है।

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, our senior colleague and hon. Minister for Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawar, has responded to many of the concerns, which had been raised by the hon. Members yesterday. Therefore, I would not like to go into those things again.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *in the Chair]*

However, Sir, I would like to point out that planning in India has always focussed on removal of poverty, unemployment and raising the growth in agricultural production as core concerns. Consequently, apart from raising growth rate in the economy, a number of anti-poverty and employment generation programmes have been launched from time to time.

In recent years, the growth rates have increased significantly. The rate of growth of GDP during the period 1951-81 was close to 3.6 per cent per annum, whereas from 1981 to 2001, the rate of growth was 5.6 per cent. The latter period has also seen substantial reduction in the proportion of persons living below poverty line, from nearly 45 per cent in 1983 to 26 per cent in 1999-2000. Reduction in the poverty ratio is being attributed, among other factors, to the acceleration in growth rates.

An important question that the Tenth Five Year Plan addresses is, how could the growth rate be accelerated as well as structured so as to achieve even faster reduction in poverty levels. Although growth has strong and direct poverty-reducing effects, friction and rigidities in the economy could make these processes less effective. The Tenth Plan is, therefore, formulated in a manner, which explicitly addresses the need to ensure

equity and social justice. The composition of growth is important. It has been found that agricultural productivity and public expenditure on social development have stronger poverty-reducing effects than other components of growth.

The growth and poverty reduction approach integrates four main components. Firstly, agricultural development is viewed as a core element of the Plan since growth in this sector is likely to lead to the widest spread of benefits, especially to the rural poor. In this context, it is recognized in the Mid-Term Appraisal that policies facilitating agricultural growth including land reforms and watershed development are crucial. I would not elaborate on the agricultural sector, Sir; as I have pointed out, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawar, has already responded to some of the concerns expressed by the hon. Members. However, Sir, I would like to say a few words on the availability and management of water, which our hon. friend, Shri Sitaram Yechury, has pointed out and he especially drawn the attention with regard to irrigation, which is an important constraint for raising the growth rate of agriculture sector. In this connection, the priorities laid down in the Mid-Term Appraisal are completion of on-going irrigation projects; rehabilitation of the existing irrigation systems; ground-water development in areas where there is unutilised potential through back-ended subsidy schemes; artificial recharge of ground water in areas suffering from aquifer depletion; and inclusion of command area development works as part of major and medium projects. States should set up Water Regulators for periodically revising water tariffs. The States could also set up Water Users' Associations to manage distribution of water and also empower them to collect the tariff, and retain a part of it for system maintenance. Programmes for the treatment of wastelands and degraded lands, including steps at water conservation are extremely important for rain-fed areas and should be implemented by single Department or Agency along with community participation.

Sir, Shri Sitaram Yechury, the hon. Member, mentioned that water tariffs should not be increased, but I would like to point out, with all my humility at my command, that without this, it would not be possible to carry out proper operations and maintenance of irrigation works in the country, nor will it be possible to pass on the responsibility of irrigation to water user's associations.

Moreover, agricultural development is not only about irrigation and direct investment in agriculture. It should be recognized that success in this area depends critically upon the development of other essential infrastructure in rural areas including especially development of transport linkages, rural electrification and, in the case of exports, suitable handling facilities at airports. Therefore, Sir, the Bharat Nirman has been conceived during the current year for building infrastructure with specific targets for completion in four years. Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of the hon. Member about the announcement made recently as far as Bharat Nirman is concerned. The UPA Government in the coming four years is going to spend Rs. 1,74,000 crore in taking care of various programmes which need to be taken into consideration to improve the quality of life of the poorer section of our people. As far as the components are concerned, there are six components, namely, irrigation, roads, water supply, housing, rural electrification and rural telecom connectivity. In irrigation, it is proposed to provide assured irrigation to 1 crore hectare additional area, which will give a big boost to agriculture and thereby improving the quality of life of the poorer section of the people, particularly agricultural labourer. The Union Government is already assisting the States to complete last mile irrigation projects through the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme, which is known as AIBP. The outlays for AIBP have been stepped up from Rs.2800 crore in 2004-05 to Rs.4500 crore for 2005-06. Depending on the response from States, it is proposed to further step up AIBP in the coming years as a part of funding Bharat Nirman.

In addition to the revival of agricultural growth, the MTA aims at attaining rapid growth in sectors, which have a large employment potential. These include sectors such as construction, tourism, transport, small-scale industry, modern retailing, IT sector to enable services and a range of other new services, which need to be promoted through supportive policies. In order to supplement the impact of growth, specific programmes aimed at special target groups and building safety nets which have all along been part of Indian development strategy, are being strengthened to ensure that they are effective in achieving their objectives. The Government is implementing several anti-poverty programmes, both in the rural and urban areas also. In fact, yesterday, you were kind enough to refer as to what is going to happen to the urban poor. Now, this point has been taken very well. Shri Sharad Pawar, hon. Minister of Agriculture,

has already mentioned about the Food-for-Work Programme and the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. However, at the national level, there are other schemes which also need to be mentioned here.

The Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) has the objective of bringing assisted poor families above the poverty line by organising them into Self Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilisation, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets through a mix of Bank credit and Government subsidy. The SGSY programme is conceived as a process oriented programme for the poor with emphasis on social mobilisation and formation of SHGs. I am sure our hon. Member, Shrimati Brinda Karat, would be happy to know that in this category, lakhs of Self-Help Groups have come into being and the Finance Minister has made an announcement on the floor of the House that needed credit system is going to be provided specially directed towards the Self-Help Groups particularly managed by woman members.

Sir, the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) aims to provide additional wage employment in all rural areas and thereby provide food security and improved nutritional levels. The Secondary objective is the creation of durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructural development in rural areas. The SGRY is open to all rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work in and around the village or whatever habitat they are residing.

As far as urban poverty is concerned, I would like to draw the kind attention of hon. Member, Shri Yechuryji, that the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) aims to provide gainful employment through setting up of self-employment ventures or provision of wage employment. This is a demand-driven scheme, however, an annual target of 80,000 under self-employment including subsidy sub-component, and one lakh persons under training sub-component has been fixed.

It is also recognised that poverty and unemployment exhibit regional concentration which needs to be addressed. Efforts are being made to reduce inter-regional disparities through greater focus on growth in backward States and regions in order to promote balanced regional development. The Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) was launched to

address the specific problems of the backward regions of the country. The scheme consists of three components, *viz.,* (i) Special Plan for Bihar; (ii) Special Plan for Kalahandi-Bolangir and Koraput districts of Orissa; and (iii) Backward Districts Initiative. The Budget for the year 2005-06 has announced the creation of Backward Regions Grant Fund for 170 backward districts of the country. An allocation of Rs. 5000 crore has been provided for this purpose for the year 2005-06. One common feature of all these interventions is to improve agricultural productivity and to deal with the problems of poverty, especially in the rural areas. Some of the hon. Members, especially Mr. Nayak, have pointed out the importance of education and health. In fact, hon. Member, Shri Yechuryji, has also drawn our attention to the importance of providing education and taking care of the health, particularly the children. In the context of poverty alleviation, I would like to state....

श्री कृपाल परमार (हिमाचल प्रदेश) **:** महोदय, मंत्री जी के भाषण को पढ़ा हुआ मान लिया जाए । ...(**व्यवधान**)...

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, I know it is not palatable to them because they have not done it when they were there in the Government.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rajasekharan, please conclude. *(Interruptions).*

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, I will take three-four minutes. I am concluding. Sir, some of the hon. Members, especially Shri Naik and Shri Sitaram Yechury pointed out the importance of education and health in the context of poverty alleviation. In this connection, I would like to state that the prime focus of the Government in the National Common Minimum Programme is on elementary education and on taking earnest steps to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education. As you are aware, Sir, the 86th Amendment to the Constitution has made free and compulsory education...*(Interruptions)...*

डा.छत्रपाल सिंह लोधा (उड़ीसा) **:** सर, मंत्री जी के भाषण को पढ़ा हुआ मान लिया जाये । ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि (उड़ीसा) **:** सर, उस दिन तो रोकने की ...(**व्यवधान**)...इन्होंने तो पूरा पढ़ दिया । ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How much time will you take?

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, I will just take another two-three minutes. I am concluding...*(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. *...(Interruptions)...* There are 40 Special Mentions. *...(Interruptions)...*

डा.छत्रपाल सिंह लोधा : सर मंत्री जी के भाषण को टेबल करा दिया जाए । यह पढ़ा हुआ मान लिया जाएगा । ...(**व्यवधान**)...

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN. All right, Sir, I will try to conclude it. Please bear with me. You have raised so many points, which I need to respond.

डा.छत्रपाल सिंह लोधा : महोदय,*

श्री उपसभापति : यह रिकार्ड पर नहीं जाएगा ।

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, Sarva Shikhsha Abhiyan, an all comprenehsive programme launched to meet the needs of, particularly, the rural population. Sir, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) has been revised and universalised at primary level from 1st September, 2004 to see that there is no provision of allowing the dropouts. In fact, this would also take care of the nutrition levels by providing good nutritive food to the children who are studying in the primary and middle level.

Sir, regarding health, I would like to say that a great deal has been achieved over the past 54 years in terms of expanding the reach of the health infrastructure across the country. The public health sector has been organised to finance and deliver curative care and to implement a number of population stabilisation and disease control programmes. Sir, I would also like to draw the attention of the Members about the launch of National Health Mission, which is going to take care, especially, of the rural poor.

Sir, I am concluding. You would be happy, I know. Hon. Members may, therefore, appreciate that the Government is very conscious of the close linkage between agriculture growth on the one hand, and, poverty and unemployment on the other. The MTA has clearly articulated a strategy

*Not recorded.

whereby these objectives can be attained in a synergistic manner through careful dovetailing of Plan schemes and programmes. Sir, I am very happy that this House has taken up this important issue for debate and discussion. I am sure that the deliberations will enrich future strategies for economic and social well being of our people.

Sir with your permission, I would like to conclude by quoting from the closing remarks made by the hon. Prime Minister...*(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is in how many pages. *{Interruptions)*

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Just two paras, Sir. *(Interruptions)*

श्री रुद्रनारायाण पाणि : सर, इन्होंने तो ...(**व्यवधान**)..

श्री उपसभापति : आप बैठिए । ...(**व्यवधान**)... पाणि जी, आप बैठिए । ...(**व्यवधान**)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Sir, it is an important matter and the Minister is replying...*(Interruptions)...*Kindly consider it... *(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is why I am giving...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Sir, while making the concluding remarks in the National Development Council meeting held on 28th June, 2005, the Prime Minister said, "Today, India is at a historic point in its development trajectory. As I said in my opening remarks yesterday, we are now at a point in time where we can deliver growth at a rate of 7 per cent to 8 per cent. At this point in time, owing to the developments over the last two decades, there are no external constraints to the growth of our country." It is very much in the realm of possibility for this country to become a prosperous nation, rid of the perennial scourges of poverty, ignorance and disease. The world is today looking at India with a greater interest, as the saga of our development and rise to prominence on the international stage unfolds. Rare are such moments in history when a nation suddenly captures the imagination of the world. In such circumstances, Sir—I am concluding with the quotation "if there are any constraints, these are purely internal. Our success in living up to our potential depends solely only on us. No external force can be blamed if we do not rise up to everyone's expectations. Therefore, it is incumbent on all of us in this august gathering to ensure that we realize this potential.

It is this vision of a resurgent India that must guide our actions while discharging our duties." And, I close the quotation. Thank you very much indeed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, we have about 36 Special Mentions. It has been decided to skip lunch hour and to complete the Special Mentions so that we can complete the other Legislative Business. Now, the Short Duration Discussion is over and the reply is also given by the hon. Ministers. We will now take up Special Mentions. Shri R.S. Gavai.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Demand for Recognition of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai as an 'Institution of National Importance'

SHRI R.S. GAVAI (Maharashtra): Sir, the matter, relating to recognition of the Asiatic "Society of Mumbai, which was established in 1784 and declared as an Institution of National Importance in the year 1984, has been pending with the Ministry of Culture since August, 2003. The management of this Society at Mumbai and its employees union have been pursuing this matter repeatedly with the Ministry of Culture since 2003, but all in vain. The response of the Ministry is not positive.

I, therefore, request the hon. Union Minister of Culture to take necessary steps to declare the Asiatic Society of Mumbai as an 'Institution of National Importance' at the earliest.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI (Maharashtra): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Bimba Raikar. Shrimati Bimba Raikar. (*Time-bell).* I will not give a chance to her. Shrimati Sukhbuns Kaur, not here. Mr. Premachandran, not present. Dr. Gill, not present. Shrimati Bimba Raikar, are you not interested in making your Special Mention? I called your name, but you were not there.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR (Karnataka): Sir, I never thought that you would call me so early, because I think you are always against women *...(Interruptions)...*